

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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R 021028Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 7999

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SG, CA
SUBJECT: QUEBEC PLANNING TO OPEN OFFICE IN DAKAR

REF: QUEBEC 453 AND 440

1. SUMMARY. SENEGALESE HAVE COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH CANADIAN EMBASSY IN APPROVING ESTABLISHMENT OF QUEBEC OFFICE IN DAKAR, AND FOREIGN MINISTRY, AT LEAST, IS UNAWARE OF ANY PLANNED LEVESQUE VISIT. PRESENT COOPERATIVE SENEGALESE ATTITUDE, DESPITE POWERFUL DRAWING POWER OF FRANCOPHONE TIES TO QUEBEC, MAY BE ONE DIVIDEND OF SUBSTANTIAL AND HIGHLY PUBLICIZED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CARRIED ON BY CANADA IN SENEGAL. END SUMMARY.

2. I ASKED NEWLY ARRIVED CANADIAN AMBASSADOR ASSELIN ABOUT PLANS FOR A QUEBEC OFFICE IN DAKAR. ASSELIN SAID THAT HE IS RELAXED ABOUT THESE PROSPECTS. THE SENEGALESE AUTHORITIES DID NOT GIVE THEIR APPROVAL UNTIL CLEARANCE WAS OBTAINED FROM OTTAWA. THE SENEGALESE ALSO SAID THAT
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THE GROUND RULES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE QUEBEC OFFICE SHOUL BE NEGOTIATED FIRST BETWEEN OTTAWA AND QUEBEC. ASSELIN SAID THAT THE BALL IS NOW IN THE CANADIANS' COURT. HE CONFIRMED INFORMATION IN QUEBEC 453 THAT INTRA-CANADIAN NEGOTIATIONS ARE DIFFICULT AND MOVING SLOWLY.

3. ASSELIN SAID THE PROBLEM OF HAVING TWO CANADIAN OFFICES IN A SMALL TOWN LIKE DAKAR IS A LOT MORE DELICATE THAN IN PARIS, LONDON, BRUSSELS OR NEW YORK WHERE BOTH ARE SUBMERGED IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREA. WHAT WORRIES HIM EVEN MORE, HOWEVER, IS THE PROSPECT OF A LEVESQUE VISIT AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT TURN INTO A FRANCO-PHONE ORGY LIKE THE QUEBEC PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO PARIS NOVEMBER 2-5. ASSELIN SAW SENEGALESE FOREIGN MINISTER SECK NOVEMBER 29 AND ASKED ABOUT SUCH A VISIT. SECK SAID THAT, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, THE SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD NO REQUEST FOR A VISIT FROM LEVESQUE OR ANY OF HIS SUBORDINATES. IN OTHER WORDS, SECK HASN'T HEARD, BUT PRESIDENT SENGHOR MAY HAVE MADE PLANS WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE ELSE. ASSELIN FEARS THAT SENGHOR MIGHT IRRITATE OTTAWA THE WAY GISCARD DID, AND JEOPARDIZE PLANS FOR EXPANDED CANADIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. ASSELIN HAS CLEARLY BEGUN TO LOBBY AGAINST THIS CONTINGENCY.

4. COMMENT. ASSELIN'S REMARKS SUGGEST THAT SENEGALESE ARE TREADING CAREFULLY TO AVOID EXACERBATING DOMESTIC CANADIAN POLITICS. PRESIDENT SENGHOR IS VIGOROUS PROPONENT OF PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S FRANCOPHONE COMMONWEALTH (DAKAR 2765) AND HE RECENTLY URGED "DYNAMIC COMPROMISE" TO PRESERVE BI-CULTURAL CANADA (DAKAR 7883). SENGHOR'S HELPFUL STANCE MAY BE ONE DIVIDEND OF OTTAWA'S IMPRESSIVE EFFORTS IN RECENT YEARS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC CONFIDENTIAL

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COOPERATION AND OTHER EXPANDED TIES TO SENEGAL. LOCAL PRESS CARRIES STEADY STREAM OF STORIES ON VISITS BY CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS, COMMERCIAL DELEGATIONS AND, IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR, SUPPLY MINISTER JEAN PIERRE GOYER, SPECIAL ADVISER ON CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES. CANADIANS HAVE EARNED SUBSTANTIAL FAVOR THROUGH WELL-RECEIVED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN ARTISANAL FISHING, TECHNICAL AND JOURNALISM EDUCATION, FORESTRY, OCEANOGRAPHY AND NUMEROUS OTHER AREAS. IN FACT, SENGHOR RECENTLY DECLARED THAT CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO SENEGALESE DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN, WITH THAT OF FRANCE, "THE MOST DECISIVE." OTTAWA THUS SHOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT LEVERAGE FOR KEEPING WITHIN BOUNDS SENEGAL'S FRATERNAL ENTHUSIASM OVER ANY PROPOSED VISIT BY QUEBEC PRIME MINISTER. NONETHELESS, SENGHOR'S WEEK-LONG PRIVATE VISIT TO CANADA IN 1976 CENTERED ON MONTREAL AND HE MAY FEEL OBLIGED TO RETURN QUEBECOIS HOSPITALITY AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME. REFERRING TO THAT VISIT, AMB ASSELIN SAID, "WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT COMMITMENTS SENGHOR MAY HAVE MADE." COHEN

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